CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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SECURITY INFORMATION

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COUNTRY	USSR (Georgian SSR)	REPORT NO.	[redacted]
SUBJECT	Road Bridge over the Mokvy River	DATE DISTR.	13 August 1953
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(FOR KEY SEE REVERSE)

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SOURCE: [redacted]

1. Location of the Bridge:

1. A new road bridge over the Mokvy River was located about half-way between Ochemchiri (N 42-47, E 41-28) and Mokvi (N 42-50, E 41-28). Both places are on the Georgian Black Sea coast. Ochemchiri is about 120 km north of Batumi (N 41-38, E 41-38) and about 40 km south-southeast of Sukhumi (N 43-00, E 41-02). Mokvi is about four to six km north-northwest of Ochemchiri. About midway between Ochemchiri and Mokvi the Mokvy River empties into the Black Sea. It must be crossed by the Tbilisi-Batumi-Sukhumi-Tuapse railway as well as by the new coastal road. The newly-built coastal road, which utilized the old road-bed until the summer of 1949, turned away from the coast in the vicinity of the mouth of the Mokvy River in order to obviate the construction of a larger bridge. This detour has been closed off since the completion of the bridge in 1949, so that, at present, the route of the new coastal road crosses the Mokvi River and avoids the old road detour away from the coast.

2. Origin of the Bridge:

2. Construction of the bridge was begun by Hungarian PWs in March 1948, and was completed by German PWs in July 1949. This bridge was the last one of a series of large bridges to be built in this area, except for the projected construction of a bridge over the Rion River reported to be 1100 m long, the completion of which was probably not possible before 1950. The 175 m bridge over the Galidzga River, which empties into the Black Sea just south-southeast of Ochemchiri, was opened to traffic in June 1949, while the 45 m bridge over the Aziqua was reportedly finished in 1947. All of these bridges are heavily reinforced concrete with a roadway a little over 12 m wide, and are supposed to be equal to heavy requirements. About 15 km north-northwest of Ochemchiri, a wider bridge, about 45 m long, has been built in Tamysn (N 42-51, E 41-18). This bridge is included in the same bridge construction plans for the new Black Sea coastal road to Kutaisi (N 42-15, E 42-27) and Batumi (N 41-38, E 41-38). Informant has forgotten the name of the river over which this road passes. This bridge was opened to traffic in September or October of 1949.

Supervision of Bridge Construction:

3. Supervision of construction was in the hands of Soviet engineer officiers. Informant is of the opinion that these bridges were built by order of the Soviet Army. The PW camp was under the control of the MVD; however, this did not preclude military jurisdiction over construction work. Almost all PW camps directly under the control of the Soviet Army were turned over to the MVD in 1947, regardless of whether or not the PWs were working on military construction projects.

Technical Equipment for Bridge Construction

4. Informant characterizes the allotment of technical equipment as unusually meager. Excavation, especially the extensive embankment fills, was done with shovels and wheelbarrows. Two concrete mixers were available for the numerous concrete construction jobs to be done; they were insufficient, so that it was often necessary to mix by hand. The heavy steel beams which were used to carry the roadway from pillar to pillar were moved with a hand-crane. The cement came predominantly from a distant part of Rumania, and all the remaining industrial constructions in the whole area as far as Kvesani (N 42-51, E41-40) were supplied with Rumanian cement.

Size and Design of the Bridge

5. The bridge over the Mokvy River has a total breadth of about 14 m, a roadway breadth of about 12 m , and length of 155 m. It crosses not only the insignificant Mokvy River, but also the dry bed, which, during periods of high water, turns into a rapid stream. The bridge rests on six pillars about 6.5 to 7 m over the normal water level of the stream. The pillar foundations were constructed by driving iron pilings, sometimes weighing two tons, into the ground with a Diesel pile driver. These pilings were fitted with steel reinforcements and filled with concrete. A pillar was sometimes composed of 12 such pilings. Double-T beams were laid on the pillars with great labor. The double-T beams were 12 to 15 m long and weighed 25 to 28 tons. The roadway rested on these beams. The thickness of the strongly reinforced concrete road surface was reported by informant to be 30 to 35 cm. Three to five cm of asphalt compound were laid over this. The walk-ways on either side were no more than 45 to 50 cm in breadth.

Importance of the Bridge

6. The significance of the bridge is contained in the importance of the entire new bridge project, which makes possible uninterrupted traffice of the heaviest kind on this road, which is partly new and partly reconstructed from the old coastal road in the direction of Kutaisi-Tbilisi and Batumi-Turkish border. This program was probably concluded with the completion of the aforementioned large Rion bridge, which is reportedly in the vicinity of Kutaisi. This was probably the end of a road construction project which had engaged Soviets in increasing numbers since 1944/45 all along the east coast of the Black Sea, and one which was implemented by the ruthless use of innumerable German PWs.

Personnel:

7. Personnel for the construction of the Mokvi bridge generally included 300 men. Work was done in three shifts with sometimes 100 PWs to a shift. Soviets, in decreasing numbers, were used solely as tractor operators.

Guarding of the Bridges:

8. Guarding of the bridges was generally, and in the case of the Mokvi bridge, especially, carried on by the Soviet Army. There are, however, occasional bridges which, while crossing, appear to be unguarded.

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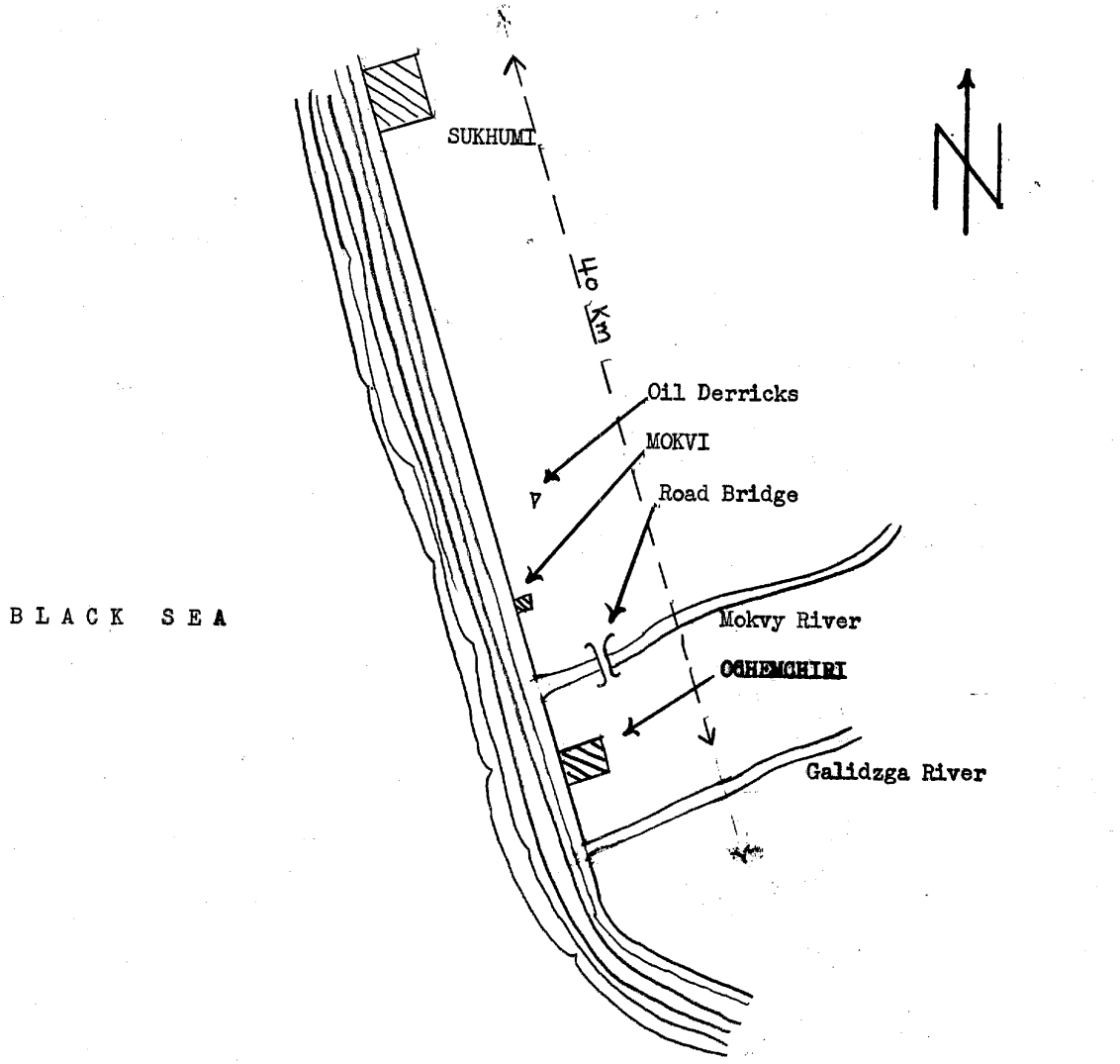
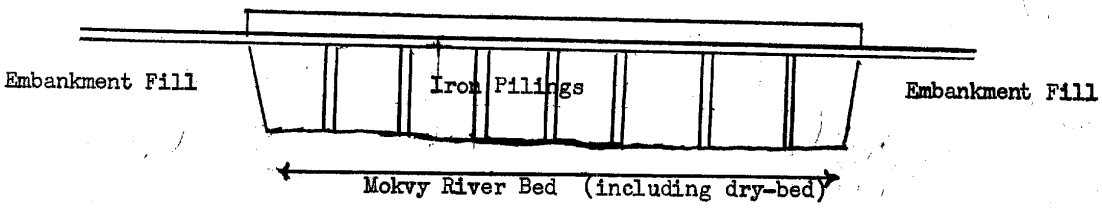
ROAD BRIDGE OVER THE MOKVY RIVER



ROAD BRIDGE OVER THE MOKVY RIVER



BRIDGE OVER THE MOKVY RIVER